PROFITABLE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND METHOD THEREOF

BY

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BACKGROUND

[0001]   This invention relates to a system and method for fulfilling an advertiser's advertised request. In particular, this is a computer implemented system and method for providing a platform that is accessible by an unlimited number of members of the computer network community, which allows an advertiser to publish a classified advertisement, offering a specified reward to be paid to a solver, solutionist or matchmaker who satisfies the advertiser's advertised request.

[0002]   Classified newspapers or advertisements exist where an advertiser may publish an advertisement and a solver fulfills the advertisement. The classified newspapers or advertisements, however, are not effective because there is no reward that is necessarily promised by the advertiser to be paid to the solver, and the advertisements are usually limited to specific categories. Also, the number of prospective solvers that are reached by the classified newspapers or advertisements are limited by the geographic and physical distribution of such publications.

[0003]   In auctions, one party tries to sell an item or service through a third party, and the highest bidder willing to purchase the item or service

receives the item or service in exchange for the bid amount. An auction, however, has shortcomings because the bidder may be able to purchase the item or service in question only if the amount he bid is higher than anybody else's bid.

[0004] In an Internet intermediary example for fulfilling an advertiser's advertised request, one party acts as an agent for a customer in obtaining an item such as a plane ticket, or a service, for a price specified by the customer. If the agent can fulfill the requirement, the customer makes a payment, receives the item, and the agent receives compensation such as a kickback. This example, however, is not desirable as there is no direct communication between the customer and the provider of the item or service, and the customer does not have the choice to select the provider. The selection of the provider is made solely by the agent, and the customer is obligated to pay the provider chosen by the agent as long as the customer's initial purchase specification is met.

[0005] Another example for fulfilling an advertiser's advertised request exists where one party posts information on the Internet and another party fulfills the need with open negotiations between both parties, such as on an online bulletin board or in a chat room. This example is also not desirable, as the types of advertised requests may be limited by the predetermined interests of the members of such bulletin board or chatroom, and there may not be a mandatory monetary reward amount to be paid by the advertiser to the solver for completing the advertised request.

SUMMARY

[0006] The computer implemented profitable information (PI) management system and method of the present invention allows publication of classified advertisements offering a reward (CORs). It opens the market for services and advertisements to unlimited categories and objectives, and it gathers virtually an unlimited number of advertisers present on a computer network, such as the World Wide Web. This invention allows advertisers and solvers to make contact with one another through a reward advertisement scheme where rewards are paid directly to the solvers.

[0007] The present invention is an Internet-based system and method that allows anybody access to CORs. The PI management system and method allows advertisers to market their proposals on-line to whomever wanting to complete the project in exchange for the reward amount. Any person, group, or organization can satisfy the advertiser's advertised request, and anyone who fulfills the advertiser's advertised request, accepts the offers. The CORs may advertise any kind of demand, including, but not limited to, information searches, specific industry demands, or personal requests. The reward amount can be any form of monetary compensation. Reverse CORs are classified advertisements that specify the conditions that the advertisers are willing to fulfill in return for a reward. This is a subcategory of CORs.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0008]   Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram showing one embodiment of the profitable information (PI) management system of the present invention, and the interaction of the advertiser submitting a classified advertisement offering a reward (COR) and a number of prospective solvers therewith.

[0009]   Fig. 2 is a schematic diagram illustrating that at any given time, a number of prospective solvers may be attempting to complete the advertiser's advertised request.

[0010]   Fig. 3 is a conceptual diagram illustrating a relationship between the advertiser and the solver , whereupon completion of the advertised request by the solver, the advertiser must pay a predefined reward amount to the solver.

[0011]   Fig. 4 is a schematic diagram of one embodiment of the PI central server of the present invention.

[0012]   Fig. 5 is a flowchart illustrating one embodiment of the COR management program of the present invention.

[0013]   Fig. 6 is a flowchart illustrating one embodiment of the COR without contact information publishing program of the present invention.

[0014]   Fig. 7 is a flowchart illustrating one embodiment of the COR with contact information publishing program of the present invention.

[0015]   Fig. 8 is a flowchart illustrating one embodiment of the COR contact info retrieval program of the present invention.

[0016]   Fig. 9 is a flowchart illustrating one embodiment of the service fee program of the present invention.

[0017]   Fig. 10 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention.

[0018]   Fig. 11 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention having a COR Submit section.

[0019]   Fig. 12 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention having a member Sign Up section.

[0020]   Fig. 13 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention having a member Log In section.

[0021]   Fig. 14 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention having a COR Contact Inquiry section.

[0022]   Fig. 15 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention having a COR Recall section for removing a COR from the PI broadcast platform.

[0023]   Fig. 16 is a computer screenshot illustrating one embodiment of the PI broadcast platform of the present invention having a Subscribe section.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0024] Figure 1 illustrates a general schematic diagram of the profitable information (PI) management system **1** of the present invention. The PI management system **1** comprises a PI central server **20** and a PI broadcast platform **30**, where the PI management system **1** and its components may be located on a publicly available computer network, such as the World Wide Web on the Internet. In one embodiment, PI broadcast platform **30** may be accessible from a web browser.

[0025] The PI management system **1** allows advertisers **5** to submit classified advertisements offering a reward (CORs) **10**. The COR **10** is an advertisement submitted by an advertiser **5** with a promise to pay a reward amount **9** specified by the advertiser to a solver **7** who performs an advertised request 8, i.e., one or more conditions specified by the advertiser **5**. See Figure 3.

[0026] CORs **10** are published on the PI broadcast platform **30** for review by prospective solvers **40**.

[0027] Fig. 10 shows a computer screenshot of the homepage of a website containing one embodiment of the PI management system **1**. Advertisers **5** may submit CORs **10** by following a hyperlink to the COR Submit screen shown in the left navigation frame. Prospective solvers **40** may search or browse the site for CORs **10** of interest.

[0028]   The PI management system **1** of the present invention provides a cyberspace for a vast population of advertisers **5** and prospective solvers **40** from across the World Wide Web community to instantly seek out and communicate with each other. The advertisers **5** solicit fulfillment of a certain advertised request **8** in exchange for a monetary reward amount **9**, which will be paid by the advertiser **5** to the solver **7** upon completion of the advertised request **8** to the satisfaction of the advertiser **5** and as mutually agreed upon by the advertiser **5** and the solver **7**.   See Figure 3.   One advertiser **5** may publish a COR **10** which reaches an unlimited number of prospective solvers **40** simultaneously.   Fig. 2 shows an example in which prospective solver 1 **40a**, prospective solver 2 **40b**, and prospective solver 3 **40c** correspond to the CORs **10** on the PI broadcast platform **30** posted by the advertiser **5** and communicate with the advertiser **5** regarding the particulars of the CORs **10**, such as the advertised request **8**, the reward amount **9**, the time of completion of the request, the method of payment, etc.   As illustrated in Figure 3, whichever prospective solver **40** that first completes the advertised request **8** as specified by the advertiser **5** becomes the solver **7**, and the solver **7** is entitled to receive the reward amount **9** in exchange for the services rendered.

[0029]   Figure 4 shows one embodiment of the PI central server **20** of the present invention, which includes a central processor unit (CPU) **21** connected to: a random access memory (RAM) **22**, a read-only memory (ROM) **23**, an Internet connection port **24**, and a data storage device **200**. The PI central server **20** is communicably connected to the PI broadcast platform **30** through the Internet connection port **24**. The data storage device **200** includes an advertiser database **201**, a COR database **202**, a

member database **203**, a COR management program **300**, a COR without contact information publishing program **400**, a COR with contact information publishing program **500**, a COR contact info retrieval program **600**, and a service fee program **700**. Although the individual contents of the data storage device **200** are depicted within a single object in Figure 4, it is readily perceivable by those skilled in the art that any one or more of such contents may be physically stored in different locations, and even the individual contents may be broken into parts and stored in different locations.

[0030]   Figure 5 is a flowchart diagram of the COR management program **300**. In step **301**, an advertiser **5** accesses the PI management system **1** through the PI broadcast platform **30**. The homepage depicted in Figure 10 is an example of a web page interface between the PI broadcast platform **30** and its users, including the advertisers **5**, prospective solvers **40**, and solvers **7**. In step **302**, the advertiser **5** may initiate the COR management program **300** by choosing either A) a COR published without contact information, or, B) a COR published with contact information.

[0031]   If the advertiser **5** selects the former as in step **303**, the PI management system **1** in step **305** further proceeds to COR without contact information publishing program **400**, as in Figure 6.

[0032]   In step **402**, advertiser **5** may further choose 1) add a new COR **10** for publication on the PI broadcast platform **30** by following a hyperlink entitled, "COR Submit", or 2) remove his own existing COR **10** by following a hyperlink entitled, "Recall".

[0033]   If the advertiser **5** chooses to add a new COR in step **403**, and then, in step **405**, the PI management system **1** requests advertiser **5** to submit information related to the new COR he wishes to create, including the advertised request **8**, the reward amount **9**, and the COR-ID for ownership verification, e.g., when it is recalled before expiry. As in Figure 11, the system **1** may request additional information such as the request category, the expiration date of the COR or the number of days that the COR would be valid, the advertiser's contact information such as e-mail address, and a URL address to the advertiser's website. Some or all of the additional information may be optional in one embodiment.

[0034]   After the PI management system **1** receives the COR information requested in step **405**, the system **1** in step **406** numbers and creates records of 1) the COR in the COR database **202** and 2)of the advertiser's contact information and the COR-ID in the advertiser database **201** according to the COR information, and then proceeds to step **407** to publish the numbered COR **10** on the PI broadcast platform **30**, albeit the contact information related to the COR **10** is hidden from view by anybody browsing the COR **10** on the PI broadcast platform **30**. The program **400** ends in step **420**.

[0035]   If the advertiser **5** chooses to remove a COR as in step **413**, in one embodiment, the advertiser **5** is directed to a new web page as in Figure 15. Here, the PI management system **1** prompts the advertiser **5** to enter information related to the COR **10** to be removed in question, such as the COR number and the COR-ID, as in step **415**. The PI management system **1** then verifies in step **416** whether the COR-ID received from the

advertiser **5** corresponds with the value stored in the advertiser database **201**.

[0036]   If the COR-ID is not verified, then the PI management system **1** requests the advertiser **5** to submit the COR number and COR-ID again in step **419**. The advertiser **5** may be given a limited number of attempts to enter the COR number and the COR-ID for security purposes, such that if the advertiser **5** fails to provide the matched COR number and COR-ID within the limit, he would be locked out from attempting to remove the COR until the ownership is verified in another way, or, the COR will be removed by the COR without contact information publishing program **400** of the system 1 on the expiration date automatically.

[0037]   If the COR-ID is successfully verified, then the COR without contact information publishing program **400** of the PI management system **1** removes the COR **10** in question from the PI broadcast platform **30**, as in step **417**, and the program **400** ends in step **420**.

[0038]   If, instead, the advertiser **5** selects the latter, i.e., a COR published with contact information, the advertiser **5** must be verified as a member of the PI management system **1**.

[0039]   Anybody can access the system **1** through the PI broadcast platform **30**. A non-member of the system 1 may sign up to become a member. In one embodiment, the PI broadcast platform **30** includes a hyperlink to the Sign Up area, which allows non-members to sign up to become a member as in Figure 12. Here, the non-member provides his name and email address to the system 1 as in step **316**. The non-member

further chooses his own user ID and password for accessing benefits for members of the system **1**. The system **1** in step **317** creates a member account in the member database **203** according to received information, the non-member becomes a member of the PI management system **1**, but the account balance is zero. Then the system **1** in step **318** further proceeds to the service fee program **700**, as in Fig. 9. The service fee program **700** in step **705** requests the member's credit card information, and after successfully charging the member's credit card and crediting the member's account balance with a membership fee, predetermined by the system **1** as shown and described in steps **706-709**, the PI management system **1** returns to the COR management program **300**.

[0040]   In one embodiment, in step **314**, the advertiser **5** is authenticated as a member by the PI management system 1 by logging into his own account in the member database **203** of the system **1** using a user ID and a password through a member Log In screen as in Figure **13**.

[0041]   The COR management program **300** continues in step **315** and proceeds to the COR with contact information publishing program **500**, as in Figure 7. In step **502**, the advertiser **5** may further choose to 1) add a new COR **10** for publication on the PI broadcast platform **30** by following a hyperlink entitled, "COR Submit", or 2) remove his own existing COR **10** by following a hyperlink entitled, "Recall".

[0042]   If the advertiser **5** selects to add a new COR **10** as in step **503**, the COR with contact information publishing program **500** of the PI management system **1** next determines in step **504** whether the advertiser **5**'s account balance in the member database **203** is at least the same as

the COR with contact information publishing fee, as predetermined by the PI management system **1**.

[0043]   If the advertiser **5**'s account balance is less than the prescribed COR publishing fee, the system **1** proceeds to step **509**, the service fee program **700**, as in Figure 9. In one example, the system **1** prompts the advertiser **5** to open the payment page by following the hyperlink on the left navigation frame called Payment. The service fee program **700** in step **705** requests the advertiser **5**'s credit card information, and after successfully charging the advertiser's credit card and crediting the advertiser's account balance with a COR publishing quota fee predetermined by the system **1** as shown and described in steps **706-709**, the PI management system **1** returns to the COR with contact information publishing program **500**.

[0044]   Futher, in step **505**, the PI management system **1** requests advertiser **5** to submit information related to the new COR he wishes to create, including the advertised request **8**, the reward amount **9**, and the COR-ID. As in Figure 11, the system **1** may request additional information such as the request category, the expiration date of the COR or the number of days that the COR would be valid, the advertiser's contact information such as e-mail address, and a URL address to the advertiser's website. Some or all of the additional information may be optional in one embodiment.

[0045]   After the PI management system **1** receives the COR information requested in step **505**, the system **1** in step **506** numbers and creates records of the COR in the COR database **202**, and of the COR-ID

in the advertiser database **201** according to the COR information, and proceeds to step **507** to publish the numbered COR **10** with contact information on the PI broadcast platform. The COR publish fee is then deducted from the advertiser's account balance as in step **508**, and the program **500** ends in step **520**.

[0046] If the advertiser **5** chooses to remove a COR as in step **513**, in one embodiment, the advertiser is directed to a new web page as in Figure 15. Here, the PI management system **1** prompts the advertiser **5** to enter information related to the COR **10** to be removed in question, such as the COR number and the COR-ID, as in step **515**. The PI management system **1** then verifies the ownership in step **516**. The system **1** also verifies whether the COR number, COR-ID and member account information received from the advertiser **5** corresponds with the value stored in the advertiser database **201**, the COR database **202** and the member database **203**.

[0047] If the ownership is not verified, then the PI management system **1** requests the advertiser **5** to submit the COR number and COR-ID again in step **519**. The advertiser **5** may be given a limited number of attempts to enter the COR number and the COR-ID for security purposes, such that if the advertiser **5** fails to provide the matched COR number and COR-ID within the limit, he would be locked out from attempting to remove the COR until the ownership is verified in another way, or, the COR will be removed by the COR with contact information publishing program **500** of the system **1** on the expiration date automatically.

[0048] If the ownership is successfully verified, then the COR with contact information publishing program **500** of the PI management system 1 removes the COR **10** in question from the PI broadcast platform **30**, as in step **517**, and the program **500** ends in step **520**.

[0049] All CORs **10** are open to the public on the PI broadcast platform **30**. Anyone, non-member and member of the PI management system 1 alike, can browse or search CORs **10** with or without contact information on the platform **30**. A prospective solver of a COR with contact information can directly contact the advertisers for solution and rewards; no further actions in the system **1** are necessary.

[0050] To retrieve contact information of a COR **10** without contact information, the retriever must be verified as a member of the PI management system **1**.

[0051] Figure 8 is a flowchart diagram showing the COR contact info retrieval program **600**. The PI management system **1** charges the prospective solver 1 **40a** a predetermined COR contract info retrieval fee when the prospective solver 1 **40a** wishes to obtain the advertiser **5**'s contact information corresponding to COR **10** without contact information.

[0052] In one embodiment, in step **602**, the prospective solver 1 **40a** is authenticated as a member by the PI management system **1** by logging into his own account in the system **1** using a user ID and a password through a COR contact information retrieval screen as in Figure 14. The user ID and the password are initially selected by the member when he

signs up to the system **1**. By providing the correct user ID and the password, the prospective solver 1 **40a** is successfully logged into his own account in the member database **203** of the system **1** to retrieve the COR contact information in question. If the prospective solver 1 **40a** is not yet a member of the PI management system **1**, then in step **616**, the prospective solver 1 **40a** signs up as a member and pay the membership fee, as described in paragraph [0039] above.

[0053]   The COR contact info retrieval program **600** of the PI management system **1** next determines in step **604** whether the prospective solver 1 **40a**'s account balance is at least the same as the COR contact info retrieval fee, as predetermined by the PI management system **1**.

[0054]   If the prospective solver 1 **40a**'s account balance is less than the prescribed COR contact info retrieval fee, the system **1** proceeds to step **619**, the service fee program **700**, as in Figure 9. In one example, the system **1** prompts the advertiser **5** to open the payment page by following the hyperlink on the left navigation frame called Payment. The service fee program **700** in step **705** requests the prospective solver 1 **40a**'s credit card information, and after successfully charging the prospective solver 1 **40a**'s credit card and crediting the prospective solver 1 **40a**'s account balance with a COR contact info retrieval quota fee predetermined by the system **1** as shown and described in steps **706-709** of Figure 9, the PI management system **1** returns to the COR contact info retrieval program **600**. In one embodiment, in step **605**, the system **1** receives the number of the COR retrieved by the prospective solver 1 **40a** as Figure 14, and provides the COR **10** contact information to him as in step **606**. A COR

contact info retrieval fee is then deducted from the prospective solver 1 **40a**'s account balance as in step **607**. The program **600** ends in step **620**.

[0055]   One embodiment of the present invention involves a deal method called Do It Yourself (DIY), where the users of the PI management system **1** are responsible for conducting their own negotiations, deals, and transactions amongst themselves. The PI management system **1** will not charge any fee for such self-services.

[0056]   In another instance, the PI management system **1** provides assistance and value-added services to the users. Such services may relate to escrow, trust, certification, agency, money exchange, transportation of goods, insurance coverage, declaration, translation, B2B2C2C, etc.

[0057]   In one embodiment, the users may register as corporate or individual members of the PI management system **1**.

[0058]   Non-members are allowed, free of charge and without limit on the broadcast platform **30**, to:
1) publish CORs **10** without contact information, and recall them anytime before the customized expiry;
2) browse and search all CORs **10** both with and without contact information;
3) subscribe to custom e-newsletters, up-to-date and/or real-time CORs **10** (see Fig. 16);

4) fill in addresses to send recommendation emails with default and editable content to friends; and

5) access, read, and write guest books and forums for various topics.

[0059]   The additional benefits of becoming a paid member is that the member is allowed to log in, to:

1) allow COR **10** with contact information publishing based on quota, where the quota is counted as a number and published time period of COR **10** advertisements;

2) allow COR **10** contact information inquiries based on quota; and

3) pay a fee for more quota.

[0060]   Corporate members are further allowed to add their URL or advertisement hyperlink on the PI broadcast platform **30** to generate traffic to their business.